



HEADLINE NEWS

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
579th Engineer Detachment (FEST-M)**

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Intel officer sees flipside to Afghan insurgency by Mark Abueg

CAMP JULIEN, Afghanistan (May 17, 2010) – All alone, trying to fill a void, the military intelligence officer looked all around, but found no allies by his side.

He and the Coalition Forces were supposed to counter the Taliban, but without the support of the Afghan people, he did not have a shot.

The only explosion would be if the Coalition partnered with tribal leaders, village elders, and the government. Then, and only then, could the intel officer and the Coalition stand a chance.

The good lieutenant had to learn how to shift the balance of power out of the insurgency's grasps and into the counterinsurgency's stronghold.

Luckily for him, history and present unfolded during a skit looking into the insurgency and counterinsurgency within Afghanistan.

He looked on and understood the relationship, roles and tasks of the multiple partnerships involved in defeating the insurgency in Afghanistan.

As the fictitious representative of the Coalition Forces, 1st Lt. Jungsang Yoon, factual intelligence officer for the 579th Engineer Detachment (Forward Engineer Support Team - Main), and his fellow team members, participated in a 3-day Counterinsurgency (COIN) course, from May 14 to 16, designed to increase the understanding of Afghanistan and the insurgency.

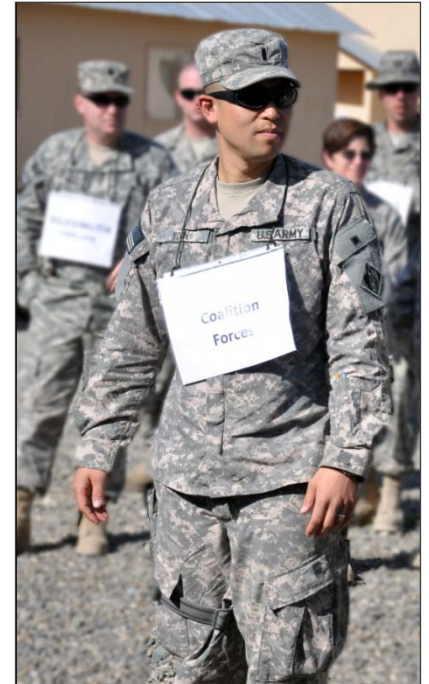
"I got to know the basics of what Gen. (Stanley A.) McChrystal is going for in terms of counterinsurgency," Yoon said. "So I know what is important out there; so I can put these COIN basics into my work piece of military intelligence to keep the team better informed and better prepared."

Operations in Afghanistan have taken a somewhat different approach in dealing with the insurgency. Gone are the days when Coalition Forces would drive down the road at blazing speeds with signs on the back of their HMMWV demanding local nationals to back away or be fired upon.

"We're going to reinforce using the government of Afghanistan to ensure that they are the element that the people trust giving them the actual place of advancement in society," said Sgt. 1st Class Casey S. Vanwormer, COIN instructor. "We're going to understand the cultural dynamics at a village level."

The COIN training is designed not just for leaders, but for all individuals with different skill sets.

"I've taught a couple thousand people in the past four months, and initially what all these people say is, 'I don't need that. I don't work on the ground. I don't work with the government,' Vanwormer said. "I say, 'But what do you do?' And they tell me.



1st Lt. Jungsang Yoon, intelligence officer with the 579th Engineer Detachment (FEST-M), participates in a skit during the Counterinsurgency Training. Yoon represented the Coalition Forces in the retelling of Afghanistan history and how it has progressed today. (Photo by Mark Abueg, 579th Engineer Detachment (FEST-M) PAO)

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Col. Richard Dean, left, FES-T-M commander, ensures Scott Kool, FES-T-M cartographer, has all his gear before he departs to Camp Julien for Counterinsurgency (COIN) training. (Photo by Mark Abueg, 579th Engineer Detachment (FES-T-M) PAO)

“And I say, ‘Well how does that affect the folks on the ground and how can you bring them to support to get the job done?’ So that’s the idea everybody has to understand.”

COIN is supposed to provide the forces necessary to put an Afghan face on the country added Vanwormer.

“Once they have a purpose, they have a drive,” he said.

According to FM 3-24, the definition of counterinsurgency is those military, paramilitary, political, economic, psychological, and civic actions taken by a government to defeat insurgency.

The other side of the coin is that insurgency is an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through the use of subversion and armed conflict.

“It’s not about how much fighting we do, but about how we better prepare our partners to govern and defend,” Yoon said.

Course material indicates that the military forces that successfully defeat insurgencies are usually those able to overcome their institutional inclination to wage conventional war against insurgents. They learn how to practice COIN and apply that knowledge.

For COIN, the side that learns faster and adapts more rapidly usually wins.

Yoon understands that it is not a matter of a military operation in Afghanistan, but a respect of peaceful cooperation in bringing the Afghan people back to the front as the face of their nation.

“When I think about COIN operation, I think about winning hearts and minds when I put my intelligence (information) together,” he said. “I’m going to look into the areas that they covered during the training, such as analyzing human terrain rather than just physical terrain from now on.”



Rodney Stephen, FES-T-M resource manager, plays “village elder” during a retelling of Afghanistan history during a Counterinsurgency (COIN) course. (Photo by Mark Abueg, 579th Engineer Detachment (FES-T-M) PAO)